



# Volunteer News & Views

THOUSANDS OF ACRES AND MILES OF TRAILS. **IT ALL BELONGS TO YOU!** – APRIL 2024

## Spring 2024 has arrived!

**Greene County Parks & Trails is ready to begin another successful season of exciting programs and events in our Greene County Parks! Please plan to get out into your parks and enjoy all that their beauty and nature have to offer us.** Please remember that parks provide a place where we can be physically and mentally active – and a great place to relieve stress, meet other people, or just spend some quiet time alone!

### UPDATE ON THE CLASS A CAMPGROUND AT CAESAR FORD PARK

This site is still an active construction zone as we have not yet been through final inspections from state and local authorities. Because of this, the park remains CLOSED to all activity, including those on foot and horse. Please share this!

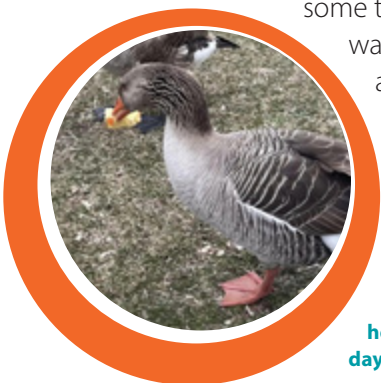
The ground in and around the campground is extremely soft due to the construction. Unauthorized traffic in the

campground is causing damage to the ground. We are finalizing rules and regulations, fees and signage with the hope of opening soon. Exciting times for us!



### LET'S CHECK IN WITH OUR FAVORITE SPRING LAKES MASCOT, HUEY!

Recently while team member, Courtney, was caring for the Critter Cove animals, she got some photos of our favorite goose enjoying an apple core on a spring-like afternoon! Huey, a long-time resident of the park, found himself with a broken wing last year. With a great vet, caring staff members and some time, he was healed and was back on duty soon after...and can now enjoy apples!

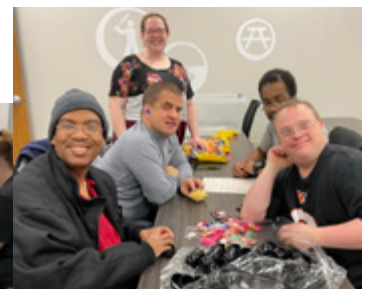


**Did you know that apples are okay for him, as long as you remove the seeds? Fruits and veggies are so much better than bread for our feathered friends. And, he is hoping that an apple a day keeps the doctor away!**

### TOWARD INDEPENDENCE, INC. & CAPABILITIES, LLC, TEAMMATES VOLUNTEERED AT GCP&T!

As a small department, we sometimes need to rely on people to help us make things happen. With our Extreme Egg Hunt that took place in March, we had 8,000 eggs to stuff with candy and stickers for 750 people to find!

A huge THANKS to Toward Independence, Inc. and Capabilities, LLC, for helping us make this happen! We had an office full of hard workers that got a few thousand eggs stuffed. We appreciate YOU!



## 2024 GCP&T PANCAKE PICK-UP!

Thanks for another great year at the The Great Pancake Pickup! The response was overwhelming and we appreciate the support and patience of everyone who came by. We are a small organization doing big things in the community...and we LOVE it!

Please know that we read each and every comment and reply accordingly, even the negative. We will take them all into consideration as we plan for 2025.

FYI: Here is what we think we are really good at...

1. Making THE best pancakes around
2. Making adjustments when they are needed

So, drum roll please...

### The Great Pancake Pick-Up at Caesar Ford Park.

That's right, our pancake breakfast will be moving to Caesar Ford Park to alleviate traffic issues around our HQ. Mark your calendars for the event on March 1, 2025!

Same great event, new location...more details to come later in the year.



## The stats:

- 9.7 breakfasts per minute
- 2200 pounds of pancake mix
- 2900 sausage links
- 20 gallons of maple syrup
- 10 staff
- 15 volunteers
- 3 grills
- 1 turkey fryer

...and a whole lot of fun!



## ANOTHER SUCCESSFUL GCP&T MAPLE SUGARING & RENT-A-BUCKET SEASON – 2024

More little minds were eager to learn about the maple sugaring process during the GCP&T Maple Sugaring Season at Sperling Lane this season!

We welcomed some kindergartners, local school students, and groups of home schoolers, for tours of our sugar camp where they learned how the sweet stuff is made...and of course, the tours weren't complete without a taste test!

We enjoyed educating everyone on how to make "liquid gold". We had full houses at the Sugar Camp on more than one occasion this season! We love educating those that love learning all about the maple sugaring process – this included the student, parents, and teachers!

FREE maple sugaring programs were scheduled for groups of 15 or more participants on weekdays throughout the month of February.

Hands on stations taught students what sap is, how to identify sugar maple trees, how syrup was made by Native Americans, early settlers and how it's done today and more.



After a rough start to the Rent-A-Bucket program due to some challenging weather, we were successful in leading private tours.

Registrants received a personalized program that included tapping their own sugar maple tree. They were able to come back throughout the season to see how much sap they get from their tree. They also received a few "sweet" goodies to enjoy as well! It was another successful GCP&T Maple Sugaring Program! A special "Thank You" to Mel Grosvenor, GCP&T Naturalist, who led the program; and, to our VOLUNTEERS and Teammates who dedicated so much of their time & efforts to making this program such a special event!





**Cemex Reserve Full Moon Hike**



**Trivia Dinner Program**



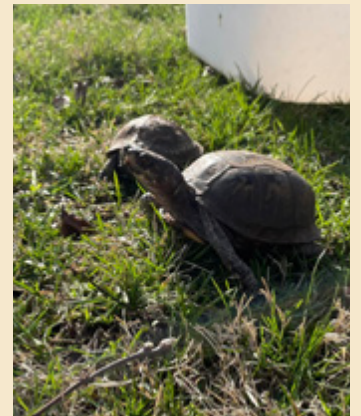
**Spa Day for Shakespeare, the Barred Owl**



### TURTLES GONE WILD!

Just like us, exercise and nature is good for our critters at the Critter Cove!

Recently, Clementine and Tangerine got a little bit of both as they enjoyed this beautiful spring-like day!



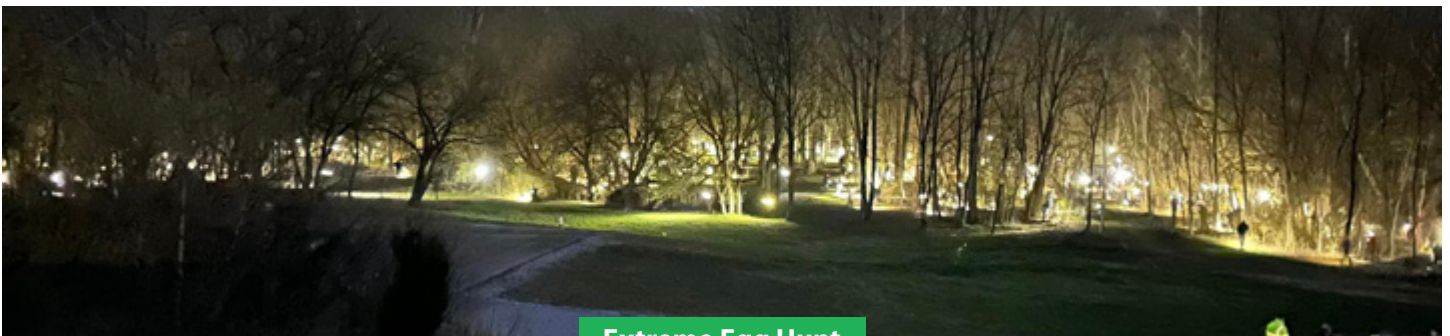
**DIY Project**



**Wellness Walkers**



**Teen Pampering Party**



**Extreme Egg Hunt**

## NATIONAL LAW ENFORCEMENT DAY

On January 9, 2024, we all thanked our GCP&T Park Rangers for what they do on a daily basis! They help to keep "Your Backyard" safe for you to enjoy on a daily basis.

**Pictured L-R, Front Row: GCP&T Park Rangers Jason Smedley; De'Andre Barker; Garrett Trout; Back Row: Darrell Hannah (Chief Ranger); Lance Geldbaugh.**



**Maple Sugaring Taste Test**



**Trail of the Missing Carrots**

## EMPLOYEE RECOGNITION



### **Dave Dudgeon recognized for 35 years of service with Greene County.**

Dave Dudgeon was recently recognized by the Greene County Commissioners for his 35 years of dedicated service as an employee at Greene County Parks & Trails!

Dave began his career at Greene County when he was still in high school working part-time during the summer here. When Dave graduated from high school he was hired as a full-time employee in the maintenance department at Greene County Parks & Trails (then known as Greene County Parks & Recreation). Dave's dad worked for the City of Xenia and Dave stated that his dad always wore a uniform and that impressed Dave, which increased his interest in working for Greene County.

Dave has been married to his wife, Jennifer, for 34 years and they have two biological children, David II and Amber. In addition, throughout the years, Dave and his wife have fostered and adopted several children – each one of whom he is very proud!

Dave's hobbies include: working out, karate, fishing, spending time with his grandchildren, and giving private karate lessons to his granddaughter. Dave also enjoys telling a few jokes and making people laugh.

When asked what Dave likes most about his job, he stated that "it's not a job, it's an adventure". He enjoys giving back to the community through his work by accomplishing something that others enjoy and appreciate. He further explained that his Team completes all sorts of tasks, deals with the public, and provides very good customer service to county residents and to those who visit our Parks. Dave says he is a laid-back person who likes to make people feel at ease, share a few jokes, and to not take all of life's challenges too seriously – it just makes you grumpy.

Congratulations, Dave, on such a huge accomplishment and for continuing to be such a dedicated employee and Teammate who is a pleasure to work with on a daily basis! 35 years of service to Greene County – thank you!

### **Jason Smedley, Greene County Parks & Trails Park Ranger, was also recognized recently for five years of service with Greene County.**



Jason was born and raised in Springfield, Ohio, and graduated from Shawnee High School. Jason volunteered as a firefighter in Springfield when he was just 18 years of age. Jason

joined the Army National Guard in 2005 and served for 14.5 years. He later went on to work as a police officer at the Jamestown Police Department for three years before joining the Team at Parks & Trails as a Park Ranger.

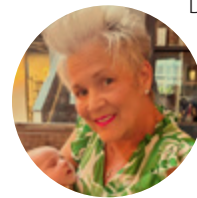
Jason is married and has one daughter, Logan, and one son, Cooper. Jason's hobbies include doing things with his family, hiking, and target shooting at the gun range.

When asked what he likes most about his job here, Jason stated that he likes helping the community when needed and going out into the parks. Jason particularly likes seeing the wildlife and the conservation efforts put forth. Another interesting story about Jason is that in 2021 he was called upon to help an eagle that was tangled up along the banks of a local pond. He stepped up and was successful in saving the eagle that was in distress. We were very proud of Jason for this accomplishment. This story was also featured in the newspapers.

Thank you, Jason, for your years of service to Greene County, and to our Parks & Trails Department!



### **Darla K. Wisecup, Fiscal Department**



Darla has been married to Dan for 18 years, has three grown children, and the most precious miracle, Jett, her 9-month-old grandson. Looking forward to retiring this summer and moving to South Carolina to enjoy watching Jett grow up.

She enjoys riding her motorcycle, kayaking, and crafts, and loves to spend time in or on the water, with family and friends, or on two wheels riding the back roads.

Darla has 35+ years' experience in bookkeeping, including her own income tax preparation business for 25 years. She is celebrating five years with a total of eight years combined service. Started with the County working for the Board of DD, and then moved to Parks & Trails.

She says, "Working for Parks & Trails, you can let your inner child run free and no one questions your motives. You can be a kid again, have fun, all while being paid. What more could anyone ask for? It's the perfect job for a 64-year-old that refuses to grow up."

## GCP&T ACCOMPLISHMENTS & PROJECTS – JANUARY THROUGH APRIL

- **Constitution Park** – New metal roof installed on covered picnic table.
- **Ohio Erie Trail** – Repaired wood fencing.
- **Hebble Creek Reserve** – Removed beaver dams backing water up under I-675.
- **Creekside Trail, Little Miami Scenic Trail, Xenia-Jamestown Connector** – All received brush cut back.
- **Fairgrounds Recreation Center** – Installed a new crushed limestone walking path from N. Detroit Street to the Alameda Drive Entrance.
- **James Ranch Park** – Replaced wood timber in the garden area.
- **New Entrance Signs Installed** – Clifton Lodge, Frank Seaman Park, Mill Bridge Launch, Spring Lakes Park, Constitution Park, McCalmont Park, Crooked Creek Reserve.

- **Cemex Reserve** – Graded driveway.
- **McCalmont Park** – Walking trails are being installed.
- **Indian Mound Reserve** – Crews replaced a bridge on Upper Rim Trail.
- **Campground at Caesar Ford Park** – Working on finishing touches and still waiting on a couple of inspections. We hope to have the Campground operational by the middle of May 2024!



## OHIO PARKS AND RECREATION AWARD RECIPIENTS

Little agencies can do BIG things! In February 2024, at the Ohio Parks and Recreation Association Awards Banquet, our agency received our first place award in Law Enforcement for the Warrior Resiliency Team Celebrations, veteran-specific programming that included a family picnic and an archery program. This award was accepted by members of our ranger division along with Greene County Veteran Services representatives, Tim and Jeff.

This year the OPRA Conference was held in Sandusky, Ohio, and is a platform for networking, education, and collaboration with other park agencies. Greene County Parks & Trails is proud of our Park Rangers and of their well-deserved award!

**Pictured L-R are: Woody Woodward, OPRA Executive Director; Tim Pennartz, Greene County Veteran Services; Jason Smedley, Garrett Trout, De'Andre Barker, Greene County Parks & Trails Park Rangers; Jeff Henderson, Greene County Veteran Services; Nate Eppink, President, Ohio Parks and Recreation Association Board of Directors.**



# GCP&T VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

## April 2024 through June 2024

To sign-up to VOLUNTEER for any of these events, please contact Amy @ 937-562-6442

### MAY

<b>05/03 Romantic Movie Night</b>	2-3 Volunteers	Russ Nature Reserve	9pm - 11pm
<b>05/07 Family Nerf Night</b>	2-3 Volunteer	Russ Nature Reserve	5pm - 7pm
<b>05/11 Mother's Day Hike/Brunch</b>	1 Volunteer	Indian Mound Reserve Parking at Williamson Mound	10am - 1pm
<b>05/14 Home-school Science Days/Discovery Hike</b>	1 Volunteer	Narrows	9am - 1pm
<b>05/15 Seniors Picnic in the Park</b>	2 Volunteers	Fairgrounds Rec. Ctr.	11am - 1pm
<b>05/16 Wiggle Worms</b>	4-5 Volunteers	Fairgrounds Rec. Ctr.	10am - 12pm
<b>05/21 Greene Grasshoppers</b>	7 Volunteers	Fairgrounds Rec. Ctr.	6pm - 8pm
<b>05/29 Case of Missing Big Foot</b>	1-2 Volunteer	Russ Nature Reserve	6pm - 8pm

### JUN

<b>06/07 Throwback to the 90's Prom</b>	1 Volunteer	Clifton Lodge	7pm - 10pm
<b>06/18 Greene Grasshoppers Water Works</b>	2-3 Volunteers	Fairgrounds Rec. Ctr.	6pm - 8pm
<b>06/20 Wiggle Worms</b>	4-5 Volunteers	Fairgrounds Rec. Ctr.	10am - 12pm
<b>06/21 Toad-ally Together/Trolls Adventure</b>	2-3 Volunteer	Russ Nature Reserve	10am - 12pm

## JAMES RANCH PARK – VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

GCP&T would like to take this opportunity to reach out to you to encourage you to become active in volunteering at the James Ranch Park. As many of you may know and observe, the James Ranch Park grounds look extra beautiful because of the wonderful volunteers and members of the Greene County Master Gardeners who take extra loving care of it, along with our GCP&T Team! It seems that some of our usual volunteers and previously active Master Gardeners are no longer available to keep the park looking "extra fabulous".

If you are available and interested in becoming a volunteer at the James Ranch Park to help with the gardening, planting flowers, weeding, and overall beautification of the park, please contact: Sharon Manley at 937-602-7785; or, Susie Lentz at 937-609-9651. They will be happy to share the details of the gardening needs at the James Ranch Park! Many of the current volunteers have been taking great care of the James Ranch Park for years and are like a family. They would really enjoy having some new volunteers to join them! Thank you!



[GCParksTrails.com/volunteer](https://www.gcparksandtrails.com/volunteer) • 937-562-6442

GCP&T Headquarters • 635 Dayton-Xenia Rd. • Xenia, OH 45385